



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOOD AND HOUSING DIVISION

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Managing Swimming Pools Impacted by Smoke and Ash

The following guidelines are recommended for the maintenance of pools impacted by smoke and ash contamination or fire damage. Do not allow use of the pool until the following steps have been completed.

1. Clean skimmer baskets of debris; remove floating debris by skimming the water surface of the pool with a pool net.
2. Brush the sides and bottom of the pool to loosen contaminants. Vacuum the pool.
3. Backwash and clean filter, discharging waste to municipal sanitary sewer only. If connected to a septic tank system, discharge the backwash to a pervious surface (gravel, lawn, open space) to allow for infiltration without erosion. **Backwash to the storm drain system (alleys, driveways, streets, storm drains) and creeks is prohibited by law.**
4. Check the filter pressure and/or flow meter of the recirculation system to ensure it is working properly.
5. Check pH and adjust it to reach a level between 7.2 and 8.0.
6. Check free chlorine level and adjust to reach a minimum of 2.0 parts per million (ppm).
7. Reopen the pool to bathers only when pH levels are between 7.2 and 8.0 and free chlorine level is 2.0 ppm.
8. Due to the amount of smoke and ash in the air, these steps may need to be repeated after cleaning the filters.

Alternatively, a swimming pool service company may be contracted to clean the pool. Check for their business license and experience in servicing pools. Repair work can only be done by properly licensed pool contractors. **Pool service operators are also prohibited from discharging backwash to the storm drain system.**

Deck Cleaning:

Clean the pool deck and dispose of the debris with the rest of the solid waste. Do not hose down the deck to storm drains. You may spray lightly first to minimize dust and ashes from becoming airborne, then use a stiff brush or broom to sweep up and discard in the trash. A mop and bucket can also be used for clean up.

Draining Pools:

Draining of pools is not recommended. If you must drain the pool, contact the storm water program of your local jurisdiction for guidance. In general, pool water must be de-chlorinated (chlorine level should be 0.0 ppm) and have a pH between 7.2 and 8.0 if it is drained.

Mosquito Breeding:

Pools with standing water could breed mosquitoes. Please call the County of San Diego, Vector Control Program at (858) 694-2888 to have staff come and stock the pool with mosquito-eating fish until the power and pool recirculation system are restored.

Damaged Pool, Enclosure or Recirculation System:

Pools that have had damage to the circulation system, the pool enclosure or the pool shell must contact the Plan Check Unit of the Department of Environmental Health at (858) 505-6660 for evaluation.